

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 2. Also, the term "sheet" was replaced with the term "sheeting".

Claim 2 was made dependent on newly submitted claim 6.

The dependency of claims 3 and 4 was changed to claim 1.

New claim 6 is similar to claim 1, but includes the limitation that there no adhesive between the filler strip and the sheeting. Although this is not specifically set forth in these words in the application, it is clear from the disclosure, as well as from the drawings, that the filler strips are simply placed on the sheeting without adhesive. The filler strips are described as preferably being cardboard without any mention of adhesive. From this disclosure, one skilled in the art would know that there is no adhesive between the filler strip and the membrane. Accordingly, it is believed that this claim language is supported by the specification.

Applicant has also added new claim 7, which is similar to claim 5, except it does not require a plurality of filler strips. It does claim membrane roofing sheeting and indicates that there is a release sheet over the seam tape and that the filler strip, which is not adhered to the membrane, has a thickness approximately equal to the combination of the seam tape and the release sheet. This is specifically disclosed in the specification at page 4, lines 13-15, wherein it states:

The filler strips 18 are preferably cardboard strips having a thickness about equal to the thickness of the seam tape including the release sheeting.

In light of this, applicant would request reconsideration of the pending claims.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in light of the Krabill reference. This discloses a masking device that, in one embodiment, includes a pair of outer strips on either side of an inner strip. It was considered that one of the outer strips could be considered a filler strip. Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 2; therefore this should be allowable as well as claims 3 and 4.

Claim 6 is a method claim very similar to original claim 1, but it indicates that the filler strip is placed on the membrane sheeting without any adhesive. This distinguishes the claimed invention from the Krabill disclosure, which discloses adhesive to bond the two side strips 300 to the center sheet. One would never modify the Krabill reference to position either side strip 300 without adhesive, as this would destroy the function of the product disclosed in the Krabill reference. In other words, such a modification would be unobvious to one skilled in the art.

Claim 7 is very similar to claim 5, except that it does not require a plurality of filler strips. Claim 7 also indicates that the thickness of the filler strip is equal to the seam tape and the release sheeting, and, thus, there is no adhesive between the filler strip and sheeting. Therefore, it is believed that this claim should be allowable.

Application Serial No. 10/765,661
Amendment dated October 27, 2005
Reply to Office Action of August 3, 2005

In light of the above, applicant would request allowance of the pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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